



**Office of the Superintendent**  
**Lolli Haws, Ph.D.**

September 24, 2013

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing today in response to the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that proposes changes to the E-Rate program. As the Superintendent of the Racine Unified School District, I want to express our strong support for the FCC's goal for the E-rate program that seeks to ensure schools have affordable access to telecommunications and broadband Internet access. The Racine Unified School District has benefitted from the E-rate program and is in need of the critical discounts to assist our schools to obtain effective telecommunications and Internet access.

The Racine Unified School District is located in a medium sized urban community in southeastern Wisconsin. This region of Wisconsin has experienced many challenges, including high unemployment and poverty. The community is proud of its diversity which can be seen by the demographics of the school district: 44% white, 28% African-American and 25% Hispanic. Of our 21,000 students, approximately 60% are eligible for free or reduced lunch. The district is made up of 20 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, 6 high schools, 2 early education centers, a virtual learning program and several alternative programs. Because of the number of schools in our district, the E-rate program has been vital in providing resources to allow us to meet the growing technological demands to deliver digital learning experiences in our classrooms.

The network improvements in our district show how the E-Rate program is succeeding in its mission. Racine Unified has additional plans to utilize E-rate funds to further enhance digital learning experiences in our classrooms at a possible cost of \$9 million. We are concerned that E-rate funding may not be available for these important projects. As the FCC moves forward with proposed changes to the program, it is important that it be understood that any changes to the E-Rate program should focus on expanding a successful program that school districts across the country depend on. The current program has struggled to meet the increasing demand for E-rate supported services and any action by the FCC should seek to provide adequate funding to the program.

I cannot over emphasize the significance of the financial help E-Rate funds have been to the Racine Unified School District. The district faces difficult fiscal challenges due to spending limitations imposed by the state and expected reductions in federal ESEA and IDEA funds that are used to support programs for students most in need. Spending controls by the state have led to expenditure levels less than the average in Wisconsin even though we serve student populations with a greater need. Without adequate E-Rate funding, our district could fall further behind in meeting the digital learning needs of students in our classrooms.

Federal Communications Commission

September 24, 2013

Page 2

Thank you for considering my response as you move forward with your continued efforts to improve the E-Rate program. The FCC should be commended for its continued efforts to protect a popular and successful program that is oversubscribed. I urge you to support measures that provide adequate funding and resources to the E-Rate program so that the FCC's goal of giving schools affordable access to telecommunications and broadband Internet access is met.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lolli Haws". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and a long, sweeping underline.

Lolli Haws, Ph.D.

Superintendent

Racine Unified School District

/pk

cc: David Hazen

Marc Duff

Tim Peltz